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ABSTRACT

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ACROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE:

TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS INTERPRET RESEARCH FINDINGS

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Abstract

In a specially designed forum, thirty teachers and administrators joined a group of researchers to interpret some recent research findings. Discussion groups focused on four issues: teacher and principal morale, specialists and conflict, teacher teams, and "loose-coupling" between the district and school. A dynamic exchange of ideas resulted, with both the researchers and practitioners gaining new perspectives. The researchers saw alternative ways to view their data; the practitioners left with a new slant on pressing educational problems. Most importantly, the two groups also saw how they can mutually benefit from each other, and many of their stereotyped images were eroded.

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INTRODUCTION

"Research is research, practice is practice and never the twain shall meet." For several years, the great divide between educational research and practice has been scrutinized, criticized, and analyzed. Despite all this attention, theory and research plow ahead to new vistas, as well as to unimportant conclusions such as "more research is needed," without making solid connections with schools. Teachers and administrators invent new techniques, discard "old" approaches, and deify "common sense" and "intuition" without taking advantage of the important perspective that theory and research can offer their work.

The primary purpose of this paper is to describe a process which was used to link the research activities of Stanford's Environment for Teaching Program with those of thirty administrators and teachers from school districts in Southern California. This experimental venture across the "no man's land" that divides research and practice was made because (1) some recent research findings could not be entirely explained by existing theories and (2) we believed that those who deal with day-to-day realities in schools would generate interesting alternative explanations for the patterns of findings and help develop some implications for practice. We also believed that the research--both the theory and results--would provided interesting new slants on some recurrent educational problems. A forum was designed for a mutual exchange of ideas. The desired objective was for each group to leave with some new ideas and a better appreciation of what researchers and practitioners have to offer one another.

Real Differences Between Research and Practice

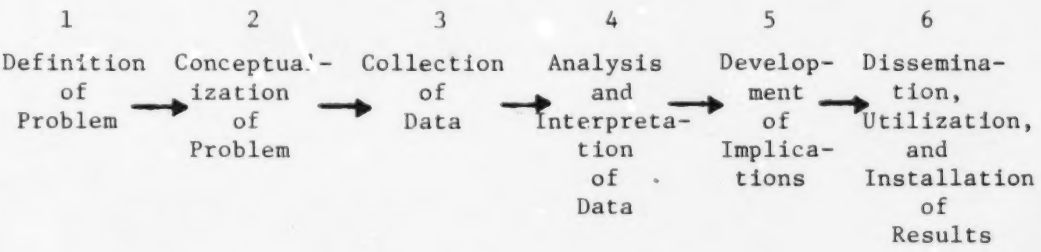
There are some obvious differences between the world of theory and research and the world of practice. Researchers seek long-term pay-offs; practitioners want immediate answers. Researchers deal with small "controlled" slices of reality; practitioners confront reality with all its complexity and confusion. Researchers attempt to contribute to knowledge; practitioners want to address practical problems. Researchers are oriented toward general social policy; practitioners pay more attention to local issues.

Myths and Stereotypes: Thus, researchers and practitioners carry out their respective enterprises with some real differences in perspective. Some of these differences, however, have been transformed into myths and stereotypes. "Camps" have evolved. Researchers are seen as 1984 dreamers and ivory-tower intellectuals; practitioners as short-sighted, noses-to-the-grindstone types. Researchers are viewed as unfeeling, detached, computer-bound robots; practitioners are labeled fuzzy and emotional do-gooders. Researchers are seen as theoretical world changers; practitioners are viewed as people with "band aid mentalities" enamoured of stop-gap measures (Baldridge, et al., 1975). These myths and stereotypes, while not themselves real, have arisen from actual differences between the two groups. The problem is that these myths and stereotypes often operate when attempts are made to unite research and practice. The myths and stereotypes, coupled with real differences, form a wedge to keep the two groups apart.

Conceptions of the Research-Practice Linkage

A second problem in linking research and practice is the way in

which the process of linkage has been conceptualized. Early views of the Research and Development (R and D) process emphasized a linear flow of activities moving from theory to the "installation" of new ideas in sequential steps (Getzels and Guba, 1960).



Researchers were actively involved in the first five steps. Teachers and administrators provided information at the third step, but did not become actively involved until research results and "well tested" ideas were put into operation. The weaknesses of this model are obvious and undoubtedly contributed to the chasm between educational research and practice.

More recently, the process of linking research and action has been viewed as more dynamic and interactive (Havelock, 1973; Guba and Clark, 1975; Baldridge, et al., 1974; Syracuse, 1972). This new view emphasizes a dialogue between researchers and practitioners at all stages of the research and development process. The dialogue involves mutual feedback on research stages of problem definition and conceptualization, data collection, analysis and interpretation. The dialogue between researchers and practitioners continues as the implications of research results are developed and as new ideas, practices, techniques, and approaches are disseminated, installed, used, and evaluated. The process is more cyclical than linear.

These newer views, suggesting a nearly equal partnership between educational researchers and teachers and administrators at all stages of the R and D process have not yet been translated into reality. The problems teachers and administrators face in implementing new ideas and practices are often viewed as outside the province of "legitimate" research. And researchers have maintained a virtual monopoly on the interpretation of research results. While such a monopoly has some advantages (a more objective perspective is brought to bear in interpreting results) it also has some decided limitations. Chief among these are: (1) researchers' theories may not capture the most important aspects of life in schools, and (2) implications derived from an incomplete or invalid perspective can be more harmful than operating by the "seat of one's pants."

The Need for Specific Linkage Techniques

Let us assume that a dialogue is desirable between researchers and teachers and administrators, at the interpretation stage of research. How can such an interchange be stimulated? Specific techniques for encouraging a research practice dialogue have been slower to develop than the acceptance of the idea itself. This absence is most consequential to the interpretation stage of research, where real differences in the perspectives and skills of researchers and practitioners are probably the most striking.

CREATING A FORMAT FOR INVOLVING RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS IN INTERPRETING RESEARCH RESULTS

The forum described herein was established to experiment within one technique for involving teachers and administrators in the critical phase

of interpreting research results. It is based on our interactive model of the R and D process and was designed to minimize the real differences between the worlds of research and practice as well as to prevent myths and stereotypes from undermining the exchange.

Objectives

The forum had two main objectives:

1. To produce explanations for some puzzling research results and some implications of these findings for schools.
2. To offer teachers and administrators some alternative ways of viewing their everyday problems.

Underlying these two main objectives was the hope that the forum would (a) reinforce our belief that teachers and administrators can contribute to research, (b) convince practitioners that research can be useful, (c) be a stimulating and enjoyable experience for everyone, and (d) end with both groups feeling that each had much to offer the other.

The session was not designed to discover a panacea to link the worlds of educational research and practice. It was viewed as a specific, and pragmatically induced, technique for stimulating a dialogue around some issues of mutual concern.

Planning Procedures

The responsibilities for planning the forum were shared by the Stanford team and the group of professors from California State University at Fullerton (see acknowledgements). A preplanning session was held to discuss the issues and structure the session.

The Cal State representatives selected the participants, notified them of the purposes and logistics of the meeting, provided the space

and refreshments (an integral part of the workshop), and served as facilitators for the small discussion groups.

Thirty participants were selected from five large Southern California school districts. Included were representatives from the various levels or units within the districts: the superintendent, district office, administrators, specialists, principals, and teachers.

Stanford provided the discussion issues, organized the content of the session and prepared the materials, and to use a musical analogy, wrote the score and conducted the show.

HOW THE FORUM WAS CONDUCTED

The three and a half hour session was divided into four activities:

1. Getting Acquainted (1/2 hour)
2. Introduction and Overview (1 hour)
3. Small Group Discussions (1-1/2 hours)
4. Large Group Summary and Discussion (1/2 hour)

Getting Acquainted

Upon arrival, the teachers and administrators socialized freely around the refreshments provided by Cal State Fullerton staff. Once everyone was acquainted, the session was convened.

Introduction and Overview

A. Sharing Expectations and Purposes

We began by eliciting the participants' expectations for the session. We then shared our main purposes:

To link some recent research on school organization to educational practice by having teachers and administrators:

a. Assist in interpreting the results

b. Discuss the implications of these results for improving school organizations.

The emphasis of the session was noted: "The session is designed to put practitioners in the role conventionally occupied by researchers--interpreting research results and generating implications for improving schools." Our third goal was to develop over the course of the afternoon a positive, interactive relationship with the Orange County teachers and administrators. This tactic enabled us to begin from the same point, and to have a common understanding of where we were heading. Two criteria were established for determining the success of the session:

1. That they would leave believing "Research has something to offer us--I learned some things today that I can apply in my job."
2. That we would leave thinking "We have some new explanations for our results--some that we would never have developed on our own."

B. Theoretical Preparation and Research Background

Next, we shared the theoretical perspective of the Environment for Teaching's research. In what was labeled as "theoretical preparation," we laid out the principal parts of an organization--goals, formal structure, informal norms, technology and the environment. We noted the research emphasis on formal structure, technology, and the environment; as contrasted with the existing emphasis in schools on technology (curriculum) and interpersonal (informal) norms. Finally, we emphasized the dynamic relationship between the parts of an organization--the "hernia theory of organizational change" (Deal and Rosaler, 1975).

After the organizational perspective, we reviewed the history of the Environment for Teaching research (see Appendix A for background information).

C. Presenting the Issues

Once the theoretical background had been established, we told the group that we had selected four major issues from the overall research for them to explore. We ruled out discussions about methodology, asking that for the purposes of discussion only, the participants accept the findings as presented. We offered to spend some time at the end of the session to argue methodological issues.

Two criteria were used in selecting the issues: (1) relevance to the educational problems faced by the participants and (2) relevance to the research issues that were most difficult to interpret. The four issues were:

Issue 1: What makes teachers and principals "happy"?

There are several ways to determine organizational effectiveness. One is to look at productivity--how well is the organization accomplishing its intended mission? A second is to look at morale--how satisfied are those who participate in the organization?

Morale is a very important indicator of effectiveness in educational organizations because productivity is extremely hard to measure. Many anecdotes circulate describing the crisis and turmoil "caused" because teachers, students, or parents become too unhappy with their school. Human relations, morale, and satisfaction are not the whole story...but in schools, they certainly are an important chapter. Hence, how to maintain or raise the morale of students, teachers, and administrators is an important issue.

Generally teachers and administrators in the research reported high levels of satisfaction with schools where they work. 67% of the teachers were extremely or very satisfied, and 27% were moderately satisfied. Only 6.9% were slightly or not at all satisfied with their particular school. Principals are even more satisfied than teachers. 75% were extremely satisfied with their schools; 20.4% were moderately satisfied; 3.9% were slightly satisfied.

What factors accounted for the differences between teachers and administrators who were satisfied and those who (relatively speaking) were not? For teachers, the socio-economic status of students, the amount of interaction with other teachers, helpful informal evaluations, school policies and discipline, principal supervision, and principal support related positively to satisfaction. School policies on discipline had a negative effect on teacher morale.

Even more important, however, was the finding that the effects of these factors varied across school settings. Teacher morale was influenced differently in open space schools, schools that were highly teamed, and conventional schools.

For administrators, internal conflict and parent advisory meetings were negatively associated with morale. Aspects of the principal's role, systematic evaluations, and problem-solving faculty meetings were positive factors.

Issue 2: What causes teachers to organize into teams? Why do teams dissolve?

In many schools, teachers are organized into small work groups or teams. In some teams, teachers plan together. In others, they plan and actually teach together. Where teachers do joint teaching, the level of interdependence is often quite high and the work relationships among the teachers is intense.

In the research, we found some evidence that highly interdependent or "intense" teams seemed able to manage more complex approaches to instruction. Intense teaming was related to individualization and to diagnostic decision-making on the part of teachers. In fact, teacher teams seemed to arise, in part, as a response to the demands of complex instruction. The problem is that teacher teams seemed to "poop out" nearly as fast as they "spring up."

Issue 3: Why do teaching specialists shake up a school?

School specialists come in many varieties. Some are non-teaching specialists: counselors, speech therapists, community liaison workers, curriculum coordinators, psychologists, nurses, and librarians. Others are teaching specialists who perform functions more closely related to the classroom and instruction: remedial reading teachers, special education teachers, reading specialists, resource teachers, music teachers, and art teachers. These specialists--both non-teaching and teaching--operate in a variety of ways. In some schools, they operate on a "pull-out" basis, removing students from the classroom for special activities. In others, they instruct within the classroom and work closely with teachers.

Of these two modes, instruction outside the classroom seems the more prevalent. In our study, 71% of the teachers reported that specialists operated on a pull-out basis. In comparison, only 25% of the teachers reported that specialists worked inside the classroom.

One curious, and as yet unexplained finding from our study was the positive relationship between teaching specialists and internal and external conflict. The same relationship did not hold for non-teaching specialists.

Issue 4: What are the benefits and pitfalls of "loose-coupling" in schools?

Organizations are usually "stratified" into different levels. Schools, for example, have three: the district, school, and classroom. In some organizations, the levels or strategies are closely linked by policies, evaluation, special coordinating roles, formal meetings, or informal interaction. In others, the organizational levels are loosely linked with each level operating more or less independently.

We found that in educational organizations, the district, school, and classroom levels were "loosely coupled." In other words, there was little evidence of formal organizational linkages between the levels. And there was little agreement between the levels on the existence of policies and other important organizational issues. Of course, we did find issues on which superintendents agreed with principals, and principals with teachers. But on aspects of instruction--the main activity of schools--there was little consensus.

For each of the four issues a table was presented providing the "hard" research evidence on which the issues were based (see Appendix B).

D. Setting the Small Group Tasks

Once the research results were discussed and the issues were identified and clarified, the session moved to the crucial activity--organizing for the small group discussions. Each participant selected the issue that interested her or him the most. They were encouraged to organize into groups composed of people from different districts and different roles.

To guide the participants through their analyses, they were given two packets of materials. The first packet contained written summaries of the four issues; the second packet was comprised of tables showing the statistical evidence of the research findings (Appendix B). Each issue also had discussion questions that asked for explanations of research findings and their implication for schools. A facilitator was assigned to each group. The groups had two main tasks: (1) to develop some explanations for the research results, and (2) to develop some implications for practice.

Thus, the group discussing Issue 1 was asked to explain (a) Why do variations in school setting influence teacher morale? and (b) In what ways do internal conflict and frequent parent advisory meetings affect principal satisfaction? They were also asked to suggest some implications for the different influences on teacher morale in various settings, and to discuss the implications of the factors influencing principal morale for innovative programs such as Early Childhood Education, Reform in Intermediate and Secondary Education, and Career Education.

The "teaming" group's central issue for discussion was: What explains the decrease in the "intensity" and "extensity" of teacher teaming? They were also asked to develop some suggestions for what teachers and administrators in "teamed" schools might do to prevent team dissolution.

The discussion of the third issue was organized around the question: Why would the presence of teaching specialists in a school be associated with both external and internal conflict, while the presence of

non-teaching specialists is not? They were asked to discuss the implications of the specialist-conflict relationship for the organization of classrooms, schools, and districts.

Finally, the "loose-coupling" group had three questions to explain: (a) Why don't superintendents, principals, and teachers agree about important issues? (b) What are the benefits and consequences of this lack of consensus (a form of loose coupling)? (c) Why is agreement lowest around the existence of policies? They were also asked to generate the implications of the research findings and the "loose-coupling" concept for the organization and operation of schools.

The Small Group Discussions

The groups adjourned to separate meeting rooms, where they immediately and vigorously plunged into their tasks. At the end of the time period, two groups asked for an extension of time. One person suggested that "the session be extended into the next day."

Each group interpreted "explanations" and "implications" in its own way. These different images resulted in a variety of group processes. Group 1's discussion became focused on communication, so they rephrased their discussion question to be "What affects collegial communication?" Group 2 launched right into brainstorming, and discussed their responses after they had all been written. Group 3 identified so strongly with the purpose that they converted to researchers instantly, and responded with hypotheses and recommendations. They demanded consensus on all items, found they had to pay particular attention to language, and had to deal with some substantive differences of opinions among group

members. Group 4's discussion was more philosophical and historical. Their discussion was quick-paced, and stayed at a high level of abstraction.

Wrap-up

In a "wrap-up" activity, the participants reconvened, and each discussion group presented its interpretations and implications. These presentations led to some lively and heated debates. When time ran out, discussions continued around the "refreshments." Several people asked for copies of research papers in addition to the materials that were provided.

RESULTS OF THE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The four groups' discussions were based on two general questions--"What do you think are some reasons for these results? What do you think are the implications of these research findings for schools?--that were tailored to each issue. The "output" of each group is summarized below:

Issue 1: What Makes Teachers and Principals Happy?

As mentioned, this group saw the question in terms of collegial communication. They felt that there were two major influences on teachers communicating with each other: the structure of the setting (formal) and personal habits or ideals (informal).

Group 1's attention then shifted to the question, Why does the structure or setting make a difference in teacher interaction? The group offered three specific explanations:

Open-space schools are more public than conventional schools. Therefore, they're predisposed to criticism. The staff needs to be more

united in its philosophy and practice than in conventional schools. More questions arise in open-space situations, and teachers are more defensive. There's more risk-taking by the teacher in open-space and teaming situations.

Conventional schools are better understood by the public. These schools would have less conflict with the community, and so presenting a united front would not be too important.

The setting can serve as a teacher selection device. Different types of teachers are attracted to particular settings. The type of school (conventional or open-space) can be either compatible or conflicting with a teacher's beliefs and abilities. The method of assigning teachers to various types of schools can have a predetermined effect on teacher interaction.

What can be done to stimulate teacher morale--particularly in open-space schools? Group l ggested:

Principal support is critical for teacher risk-taking and rewards. The principal serves as the head of the unified front that is presented to the community.

A defined formal authority system is important in open-space schools. This should come from a superior, not a peer. The high degree of visibility and interaction with the community places a premium on consistency and responsibility in decision-making.

Close teacher-principal relationships need to be encouraged and worked out. There should be acknowledgement and emphasis of the importance of interpersonal relationships in open-space schools.

Group 1 participants then shifted from teacher to principal morale. They identified two broad areas that affect principal morale: internal conflict and role definition and change.

Internal Conflict: Causes and Effects. Participants saw conflict caused by:

(a) Communications breakdown

(b) Teacher factions

(c) Unsupportive environment ("Principals need warm fuzzies, too!")

The three most detrimental or demoralizing effects were that conflict

(a) was terrifically time consuming

(b) destroyed goals

(c) increased the principal's responsibilities and tasks.

Role Definition and Change. Programs like California's Early Childhood Education program (ECE) create new management roles. Principals aren't trained to handle these new roles; many find they are suddenly viewed as professional decision-makers and as the school's representative. Parent or School Advisory Committees bring all this into public scrutiny. When advisory meetings serve as the scene for conflict or power struggles, principal anxiety is furthered.

Group 1's implications were offered as recommendations:

Administrators should learn when to wear their different hats.

Administrators should be retrained for their new leadership roles.

Principals and teachers, by uniting for a program, can avoid possible divisiveness from things such as Senate Bill 160 (California's collective bargaining bill).

Issue 2: What Causes Teachers to Organize Into Teams? Why Do Teams Dissolve?

Group 2 felt teachers got together to team for professional and/or personal satisfaction. Reasons of professional convenience or benefit included:

- Teaming provides options for kids
- Physical conditions (space) were beneficial to a teaming approach
- Tasks could be specialized and simplified
- Accountability and responsibility could be shared
- Teachers need honest feedback; it broadens the base for problem analysis and solutions
- It's different

Personal motives to team included:

- Wanting to merge with people with similar or different interests, philosophies, and skills
- A desire for excellence (or improvement); desire for change
- The need to relate to another professional adult
- Using the team as an influence mechanism

Group 2's explanations for team break-ups centered around elaborated structural and interpersonal types of conflicts, and lack of support for teams.

Conflict

- Confusion with open space, often leading to prejudice against it
- Competition and resentment between teams in multi-teamed schools
- Interpersonal incompatability; inflexibility; decline of "driving energy"; personal and interpersonal needs aren't met
- Team can't cope with external conflicts; e.g., parents

Lack of Support

- Administrative or community enthusiasm for teams wears out, and the teams fall from favor (Politics)
- Financial support is withdrawn
- System rigidities aren't changed to accommodate teaming needs

Group 2 approached its "implications" section less philosophically than did Group 1. They took an action approach, recommending strategies that could be applied to the question, "What can be done about teams dissolving?" They advocated:

- Providing whole faculty with a clear understanding of the concepts, terms, and roles of teaming
- Opening channels of communication between team members and between teams and other teachers in the school
- Understanding yourself and what motivates and influences your own behavior
- Keeping the purpose of the program clear and always in sight
- Providing alternatives
- Making it "OK" to dissolve the team

Issue 3: Why do teaching specialists shake up a school?

Group 3's explanations were produced in the form of hypotheses.

1. The less convergence of perceived needs or goals of teachers and specialists, the greater the level of conflict.
2. The more the perceived roles of the teacher and specialist overlap, the higher the level of conflict.
3. The more the teacher perceives the specialist as possessing supplementary skills, the lower the level of conflict.

4. The greater the distance between the classroom teacher and the specialist, (physical and area of expertise) the lower the level of conflict. (student contact)

Their implications included the following:

1. The principal should provide time for faculty and specialist to interact on roles, schedules, supervisors, expectations on both sides.
2. The principal should provide continuing support for specialists.
3. Specialists need interpersonal skills, as well as knowledge of content.
4. Common goal expectations of specialist by district and schools should be developed.
5. Principals need skills in defining roles and managing decentralized schools.
6. There is a need for common standards on which decentralized roles are based.

Issue 4: Loose-Coupling: Why are schools loosely-coupled? What are the benefits and pitfalls of loose-coupling?

Explanations

The discussion quickly moved from the specific issue of low consensus to a more general discussion of structural looseness in schools. Five categories of explanations were developed.

First, schools are loosely-coupled because structural looseness is a strategy for survival in a pluralistic environment replete with basic political and economic differences, different perceptions of needs, and different educational expectations. Structural looseness therefore permits the organization to adapt to a pluralistic environment.

Second, the outcomes of schooling are difficult to measure. While loose-coupling may have costs, these are difficult to determine.

Third, educational organizations are a mixture of professional and bureaucratic models. The slippages between levels exist because teachers, as "autonomous professionals" are allowed to go their own way.

Fourth, administrators lack instructional expertise; therefore, instructional decisions must be left in the hands of teachers.

Finally, loose-coupling arises because the tendency towards large districts makes coordination difficult.

Implications

Loose coupling has some advantages. Total organizational change is very difficult and loose-coupling permits local change. But structural looseness also has some disadvantages. Managers often have no idea what teachers are doing. Parents cannot have any real influence over what their children learn. Without some coordination, policies, and consensus, schools can lose their direction.

OUTCOMES OF THE SESSION

Did the session work? Three criteria were used to evaluate the session: (1) To what extent was the session helpful to us in validating our theories or suggesting some interesting new explanations for research results? (2) To what extent did the teachers and administrators leave with some new ideas and approaches to their work settings? and (3) To what extent were myths and stereotypes broken down and a positive, mutual respect established between research and practice?

The evaluation of the session is based on our impressions, follow-up conversations with the Cal State Fullerton staff, and informal conversations with some of the participants. Our initial evaluation strategy included also a short post-session questionnaire. That strategy was dropped when we analyzed our innate researcher bias toward hard data and decided to quit while we were ahead. All indicators suggested that the session was successful in bridging the gap and breaking down stereotypes. To reinforce old stereotypes by sending the participants a questionnaire was something we elected to avoid. Our informal evidence seemed sufficient and suggested the following conclusions:

First, we ourselves found the session highly useful and productive. In many instances, we were pleased to have theory-based explanations for the results confirmed by those who participate directly in the day-to-day reality of schools. In other instances, the simple, obvious, and competing explanations jostled our ideas about the pattern of results. In subsequent sessions back at Stanford, we found both kinds of input from teachers and administrators immensely helpful. The practitioners were

easily able to grasp the results and to engage themselves fully in the process of theorizing. Their sense of the implications of the research results were also concise and insightful.

Second, all participants seemed pleased with the relevance of the results. A number of teachers and administrators commented that the session helped them see that many local problems were shared by a larger number of constituents, and they felt privvy to some new slants on persistent difficulties. They talked about how the ideas of the session might be directly applied to their schools or districts, and many asked for additional material from the Stanford Center. Whether this session actually resulted in changed practices is an unanswerable question. But such outcomes were not within the scope of the session. As a collateral outcome, however, many of the participants commented about the ability of their colleagues to participate in discussions at this level of abstraction, the pleasures of viewing problems more generally, and the potential usefulness of such a forum. If these groups meet again in similar sessions, this may itself be an important outcome.

Third, the workshop fostered an erosion of the stereotyped images held by both groups. The practitioners were excited and pleased that university research could uncover aspects of key problem areas, and that their ideas were sought and would be used. The researchers were happy that the research was, indeed, of "value in the real world," and convinced that repeated input from the field is a must for both responsible intellectual research and useful research results. The practitioners were impressed with the warmth and practical orientation of the research staff. We were quite impressed with the ability of the teachers and administrators to

interpret research results. Both professional groups clearly saw that they are each a valuable resource to each other--a resource that's accessible, up-to-date, and concerned with the same problems.

SOME PROS AND CONS OF THE WORKSHOP FORMAT

Is this format potentially useful as one technique to "hitch up" practitioners and researchers? Our general opinion is, "Yes." The format can accomplish some important purposes. It is important, however, for us to suggest some advantages and disadvantages associated with this format.

One major advantage is that the workshop is a one-time experience. It doesn't have to be, but it is designed as such, and its purpose is fulfilled by the end of the session. This is an advantage because it can be used to influence attitude, motivation, and participation of recalcitrant educators on both sides of the research-practice gap. It can function as a kick-off activity to a conference, and as a way to present challenging discussion material.

The structure of the workshop is easy and flexible. The format and materials are easily transportable, adaptable, and inexpensive. The content potential is literally inexhaustible. And practitioners and researchers could certainly switch roles: field people could prepare the issues they feel are most prevalent in their schools, and invite researchers to provide possible explanations.

Professionally, the skills and interests of both researchers and practitioners are improved and broadened. There's also a natural set-up for the prospect of one saying to the other, "Well, why don't you come over next week and see what I've been talking about?" Philosophically,

then, some widely held myths and prejudices are destroyed, and an important step toward interorganizational cooperation is taken.

For the research field, in general, the process provides a validity check on intellectual thought and application. Involving practitioners in the critical step of interpretation of data can spell the difference between fantasy and fact. Or, to be less dramatic, it can help researchers publish material that will influence and affect a greater audience. On still yet another level, practitioner involvement can help change the direction of research to more greatly emphasize field-initiated research activities.

What are some liabilities of the format? The first is the flip-side of a central advantage: the workshop is a one-time experience. Holding it once achieves limited ends. The workshop planners and participants should be clear about the workshop's intentions, and both groups should have a vested interest in realizing its objectives.

Preparation takes a lot of time. Most aspects of the data have to be clarified and translated from "researchese" into plain English or, at worst, into educational jargon from the practitioner's lexicon. Complex technical issues can bog down the discussion. Items that require a great deal of explanation may sap too much energy from the group, and should probably be excluded, even though they're especially interesting or troublesome. There are the hassles of transparency-making, and the extra amounts of typing time that tables require. The costs of preparing such a session are significant.

The format could easily work to reinforce myths and stereotypes unless the workshop is carefully planned and structured to assure that

long-standing research-practice grudges do not surface and undermine the session.

Finally, we don't know the scope of changes that are stimulated by such sessions. Although the format provides a useful exchange of information and breaks down some barriers, it may not be "cost-effective" if more than process outcomes are sought.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What can be done to further build a research-practice coalition that will influence research activities? The format presented in this paper is just a first step. We'd like to offer some suggestions that move beyond this initial experiment. These recommended actions are aimed at one major goal: to further the interactive partnership between educators in schools and those in universities and research institutions.

(1) Use this format to expand practitioner participation in present research activities.

(2) Include practitioner ideas at the developmental and decision-making stages of research design.

The format presents already-shaped and sorted data to practitioner participants. Yet at this point, the focus of the research is a fait accomplis. Practitioner involvement in other stages of research development could provide valuable direction for researchers, and ensure greater distribution of outcomes. When people "buy into" a project, they've made a commitment to it, and will look for ways to use "their" results.

(3) Develop ways of translating research results or information into practice and change efforts in schools.

Knowing the effects of a particular variable on another variable is of limited value to a practitioner. Strategies for how to successfully use that variable to produce desired results are essential to the practitioner.

(4) Support dissemination activities that effectively spread new ideas and successful strategies for research-practice liaison.

CONCLUSION

There seems to be a growing recognition that research and practice need one another to survive. Many of the strategies designed to promote a symbiotic relationship are complex, long-term, and expensive. Some originate with researchers; others come from teachers and administrators. Some seek input into research; others translate research into practice.

Involving teachers and administrators in interpreting research findings is one simple technique for connecting research and practice. Such a forum provides an opportunity for researchers and teachers and administrators to interact in a positive and productive way. This experiment suggests that the forum provides both groups with new perspectives, and is a first step to overpowering entrenched misconceptions and building mutual trust and respect.

APPENDIX A

Research Background

The Environment for Teaching Program (Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching) has extensive data on the organizational characteristics of elementary schools in the Bay Area. These data were collected at two points in time--1973 and 1975. Longitudinal analyses of these data have been designed mainly to assess the relationship between organizational patterns and instruction as well as relationships within and between the levels of school organization--district, school and classroom.

In 1973, participants included:

(1) Thirty-four school districts selected randomly from six Bay Area counties. The sample included large, medium-sized, and small districts. Four were one-school districts. In all districts, the superintendent completed a questionnaire and was interviewed.

(2) One hundred eighty-eight elementary schools selected randomly from the 34 districts. In each the principal completed a questionnaire and was interviewed.

(3) Sixteen schools selected from among the 188 for intensive study. In these, both students and teachers completed questionnaires and classrooms were observed.

In 1975, participants included:

(1) Thirty of the original 34 shcool districts (one-school districts were eliminated).

(2) One hundred three of the original 188 elementary schools.

(3) The 16 "intensive" schools plus 30 more, giving a total of 46 schools in which teachers completed questionnaires. Classroom observations and student questionnaires were not included in the second phase of the intensive study.

APPENDIX B

Tables of Research

Results

TABLE 1-a

Factors That Influence Teacher Morale in Various Settings

Factors	Setting: Conventional	Team	Open - Space
Lateral (Collegial)			
Frequency with which teachers:			
Share materials		**	**
Talk to each other	*	*	*
Provide helpful teacher evaluation		*	*
Provide frequent teacher evaluation	*		*
Vertical (hierarchical)			
Explicitness of school policies regarding:			
Curriculum			
Discipline	*	**	***
Student evaluation		**	
Frequency of:			
Principal evaluation	*	**	***
Principal observation	*	*	**
Supportiveness of principal:			
Overall	***	***	***
Teaching ideas	**	***	**
Discipline backup	**	*	***
Special projects	*	***	**
Parent relations	*	**	***

*Somewhat important

**Very important

***Extremely important

TABLE 1b

Factors Contributing to Principal Satisfaction

Internal Conflict (teacher-teacher, specialist-teacher, principal teacher)	-.47
Frequency of Parent Advisory Council Meetings	-.20
Principal role emphasis on working closely with teachers (instruction).	.22
Frequency of principal discussions with teachers about their work.	.22
Extent of systematic evaluations to determine the effectiveness of decisions	.22
Extent to which faculty meetings are joint problem-solving sessions (between teachers and administrators)	.21

Table 2

Time 2 (1975)

	Teaming Types					
Teaming Types	0	1	2	3	4	N
0	13	8	4	0	0	25
1	3	8	5	0	0	16
2	7	7	6	0	4	24
3	6	5	5	0	1	17
4	0	3	9	9	2	14
N	29	31	29	0	7	

Key

0 = No teams

1 = A few teams, don't work closely together

2 = A few teams, do work closely together

3 = Many teams, don't work closely together

4 = Many teams, do work closely together

Summary Table

Schools Reporting Type	1973	19[illegible]
0	25	29
1	16	3[illegible]
2	24	2[illegible]
3	17	0
4	14	7
	96	9[illegible]

TABLE 4 - a

Areas of High and Low Agreement

Between Teachers and Principals

High Agreement		Low Agreement	
Percent of teachers in open space	.88	Teachers work independently or jointly	-.06
Frequency of principal talking to teacher about job	.53	Teachers follow principal suggestions on teaching methods	-.01
Educational background of students	.65	Time teachers spend in preparation	-.10
Student SES	.70	School policies on instruction	-.06
Number of paid aides in reading	.50	School policies on student conduct on grounds	-.21
Grouping, grades 1-3, reading	.62	Persuasiveness of educational practice in getting teachers to make instructional changes	-.20
# min/day child in reading class	.66	Persuasiveness of test results in getting teachers to make instructional changes	-.21
Change over the past 2 years in curriculum materials	.54	Persuasiveness of salary and rewards in getting teachers to make instructional changes	-.04
Conflict among teachers	.53		
Conflict between teachers and specialists or aides	.50		

TABLE 4 - b

Areas of High and Low Agreement Between

Principals and Superintendents

High Agreement		Low Agreement	
Emphasis of organizations and groups in the environment on allowing students to take responsibility	.29	Satisfaction with teachers in district or school	-.0[illegible]
Economic level of students' families	.23	How active teacher organizations are	-.08
Educational background of students	.30	How active the community is	-.11
Readily available information on methods of reading instruction	.24	How much emphasis organizations and groups in environment place on teaching basic skills	-.06
Readily available information special instruction given to gifted children	.52	How often district/school uses Parent Community Advisory meetings to communicate with parent or community	-.06
How often district evaluates schools	.23	Participation or involvement in decisions on staff assignment altered to permit greater specialization--school faculty or teachers	-.19
		Participation or involvement in decisions on ability or other grouping of students--parents or community	.1[illegible]
		How decisions are made about what materials to use in reading program grades 1-3	-.04
		How decisions are made about what methods to use in reading program grades 1-3	-.0[illegible]
		The influence of teacher organizations on decisions of professional staff assignments	-.09
		Existence of explicit policies regarding type of curriculum materials	.19
		Existence of explicit policies regarding instructional methods used	-.04
		Conflict between district/school and community	-.01